Sir, the other question is that recently there was some agitation in some institutions of one of the Gulf countries. I think, those who were involved in violence there — 159 people — have been detained. Out of these, 90 are Indian nationals. They were detained and arrested, but, due to the intervention or persuasion of our Mission, 90 have been deported. In the same way, in another company, there was a strike. About 500 people have been detained and not all of them are Indian nationals; there are other nationals also. All the 500 have been deported. That is the story. Another important thing is, to protect the interests of the workers, the Ministry has taken initiatives. We have already signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Kuwait as well as UAE. We have stipulated the protection of workers' salary, medical benefits, living conditions including the domestic workers and women workers. Two days ago, I signed an agreement with Qatar in the same way. Now, initial negotiations have been completed with two other countries, that is, Bahrain and Oman. I am trying to persuade the Government of the State of Saudi Arabia to come to the negotiating table to make this kind of an agreement. We are taking care of the workers' interests and we will continue to do that.

SHRI PRASANTA CHATTERJEE: Sir, my second question is that some unauthorised agents are operating in the field. A large number of such agnecies are existing in Indian who have been identified as unauthorised agency houses. So, I want to know from the Government: What action has been taken by the Government so far to check their illegal activities?

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Sir, it is a very important question. The Government is taking all the steps. It is true that a large number of unauthorised people, claim to be agents, are going to the villages and exploiting the poor people. Sir, if you can taken the complaints of the last three years, it comes to 53 for 2005,78 for 2006 and so far 37 complaints in this year. Prosecution has also been recommended. Sir, action has to be taken by the State Governments. We are pursuing with the State Governments to take very stringent action. Prosecution must be pusued with all vigour. That is the only way. Now, there is proposal to amend the Immigration Act. It will definitely go for the consideration of the Cabinet. I can assure this House that after the amendment is passed, we will do our best to check this problem in collaboration with the State Government. With their help, we can do that. I hope all the State Governments will cooperate with us in checking these unauthorised activities.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question Hour is over.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO STARRED QUESTIONS

Development of Delhi-Srinagar (Garhwal) Road as a National Highway

* 101. SHRI RAJ NATH SINGH: Will the Minister of SHIPPING ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a)whether it is a fact that Government has declared Delhi-Mawana-Kotdwara-Pauri-Srinagar (Garhwal) road as a National Highway;

(b)whether it is also a fact that Government has completed the said road upto Satpuli but it is still pending with the present Government for completion of width; and

(c)by when the said road would be completed and the reasons for the slow progress of work?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T. R. BAALU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Delhi to Meerut sections is having four-lane/more than four-lane standard carriageway. Meerut to Satpuli is having a length of 119 kms of two lane, 57 kms of intermediate lane and 16 kms. of single lane. Beyond Satpuli, up to Srinagar, the road width is of intermediate lane in 24 kms. and single lane in 55 kms. Widening to two-lane has been sanctioned for a length of 12 kms. out of 16 kms of single lane from Meerut to Satpuli of NH-119. Further, out of 55 kms of single lane between Satpuli to Srinagar, the widening to two-lane in 10 kms length have been sanctioned and also there is a proposal for widening to-lane in 10 kms length during the current financial year.

(c) The development and maintenance of National Highways is a continuous process and widening of balance single/intermediate lane section between Meerut and Srinagar depends upon the traffic density and availability of funds. The sanctioned works of two laning of NH-119 are targeted to be completed by March, 2009.

Indian deported from Arabian countries

* 106. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN: Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether many Indian workers have been deported to India from some

Arabian countries;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the action taken to ensure that Indian workers are not harassed?

THE MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI): (a) Yes, Sir. Some Arab countries from time to time deport foreign workers inducing Indians due to various reasons. During the year 2007, the number of such workers depot .ed/ECs (Emergency Certificates) issued are as under from Gulf countries:

Year	Kuwait	Bahrain	UAE	Saudi Arabia	Oman	Qatar
2007 (till Oct. 07)	8234	1481	40088	28904	1086	2050

(b) Such deportation normally are done on the grounds of non-possession of valid visas/ resident permits, violation of local rules and regulations etc. Sometimes, amnesty is also declared for workers overstaying illegally and the overstayers are allowed to regularize their stay or leave the country during the notified period without penalty or punishment.

(c) (i) The Indian Mission organize smooth issue of Emergency Certificates by making special drives involving the local Indian communities. The complaints of ill treatment, harassment, breach of contracts etc., received from the Indian workers are taken up by the Mission with the sponsors/employers, Labour Department and local police authorities for appropriate action.

(ii) To protect the various rights of the workers, the Ministry has also entered into bilateral labour agreements with the UAE and Kuwait. These MoUs provide for a Joint Committee consisting of representatives of both countries to meet periodically to disucss and resolve grievances of workers. An additional protocol has also been signed with Qatar recently. MoU with Malaysia and Oman has been initialed. Dialogue has been initiated for similar agreements with KSA and Bahrain.